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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 KINSHASA 001079

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SUBJECT: CAMPAIGN FOR 2011 ELECTIONS KICKS OFF AS KABILA
DELIVERS HIS THIRD STATE OF THE NATION ADDRESS

REF: A. KINSHASA 1053

[1](#)B. KINSHASA 1041

[1](#)C. KINSHASA 1036

[1](#)D. KINSHASA 1033

[1](#)E. KINSHASA 1025

[1](#)F. KINSHASA 997

Classified By: Ambassador William J. Garvelink for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (SBU) Summary: In a December 7 State of the Nation address, President Kabila implicitly launched his campaign for the 2011 local and presidential elections, focusing his points primarily on domestic political issues. Kabila predicted GDP growth of 5.4% in 2010, and he lauded the progress made in each of the government's "Cinq Chantiers," or five priority development areas. He acknowledged that the DRC should improve its investment climate and maintained that the security situation throughout the DRC had improved. He asserted that local elections would be held in 2011, but did not provide a timetable for national elections, tentatively scheduled for 2011. Kabila was noticeably silent on key international issues, such as the future status of MONUC. His remarks, following a two-week period of increased public engagement throughout the country, closely mirrored campaign themes making the State of the Nation more akin to a reelection kickoff speech. End summary.

Themes: Security, the Economy, Standard of Living

[1](#)2. (SBU) Since the October 2008 appointment of Adolphe Muzito as prime minister, the GDRC promulgated a three-pronged strategy of national renewal based on restoring state authority in the East, establishing macroeconomic stability, and improving local living conditions. Kabila addressed each of these themes in positive terms through recent public outreach efforts and in his address at the National Assembly. In typical Congolese fashion, Kabila was greeted, outside and inside parliament, by chanting supporters displaying colorful banners. He called for consolidating security gains, expanding economic opportunities, and focusing in 2010 on improving substandard living conditions through his five-point program known as the "Cinq Chantiers," (literally "five construction sites") or five development priorities.

[1](#)3. (SBU) Security: Claiming the return of central authority in all provinces, Kabila stressed that "the Congolese flag flies over the entire national territory" with the successive defeats of rebel Rwandan, Ugandan and internal paramilitary forces in the Kivus and Orientale Province. He deplored the "tribalism" which he said was at the heart of the conflict in Dongo, Equateur (refs D and F). Although MONUC unquestionably has helped stabilize the uncertain

security situation throughout the country, Kabila did not mention MONUC by name in his remarks, which seemed overwhelmingly directed to a domestic audience. He did recognize, however, the assistance of the broader international community in establishing peace in the DRC.

¶4. (SBU) The Economy: Conceding difficulties in achieving macroeconomic growth due to the global financial crisis, Kabila predicted growth of 5.4% in 2010 in the DRC, nearly double this year's expected GDP growth. Kabila highlighted his success in negotiating favorable deals with international financial institutions, unveiled a multi-step plan to attract foreign direct investment, and called for a government stimulus package funded with savings from reduced debt service. He noted that the DRC had moved closer to forgiveness of the country's \$12 billion external debt. To improve the private investment climate, Kabila prioritized joining the Organization for the Harmonization of Business Law in Africa (known by its French acronym OHADA). To combat the effects of the economic crisis, he proposed significant public investment in poverty reduction under the "Cinq Chantiers."

¶5. (SBU) Standard of Living: Kabila promised progress in all reas of the "Cinq Chantiers" program, which consists of infrastructure, health, education, electricity and water provision, and employment creation (Note: The well-designed "Cinq Chantiers" official website in French is at <http://www.cinqchantiers-rdc.com>. End note). Kabila also highlighted Sino-Congolese infrastructure projects valued at \$1.4 billion in 2010, and pledged to construct or restore

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hospitals and schools throughout the country, and universities in the major cities of Kinshasa, Lubumbashi, and Kisangani. The provision of employment and utilities were key themes in recent public appearances in provinces that voted for his opponents in the presidential elections of 2006 (para 7).

¶6. (C) When Kabila announced that local and municipal elections, originally planned for 2009, would be delayed until 2011, there was a visible uptick in interest amongst the deputies and diplomats. Kabila explained the delay as necessary to establish prerequisite institutions and organizations. He said the actual date would be announced by the Independent Electoral Commission (CEI), although sources have placed the date as February 13, 2011 (ref B). He did not reference planned 2011 national elections.

On the Campaign Trail

¶7. (C) Kabila spent five days in late November in Eastern Kasai's capital, Mbuji-Mayi, recently devastated by floods (ref A) and the province in which candidate Kabila in 2006 had his poorest electoral showing. It was Kabila's first visit as president to the province, where he announced the central government would pay \$20 million in salary arrears to employees of the local Bakwanga Mines, a parastatal in which the GDRC has an 80% stake. He encouraged Kasaian to diversify their economy from diamond mining to other minerals and to resume their former agricultural productivity. Kabila next traveled to Equateur, site of recent tribal fighting, and the provincial stronghold of former strong man Mobutu and opposition MLC President Jean-Pierre Bemba. It was Kabila's first visit to South Ubangi district and its capital, Gemena.

Kabila walked from the airport to downtown along a kilometer-long route lined with locals who greeted him with shouts of "we want water and electricity," according to a source quoted by local daily La Reference. Richard Ilunga Ntumba, an assistant to Kabila's cabinet director, told poloff the visits were necessary to show that Kabila was president of all provinces, not only those that had elected him. He said Kabila planned to build upon his share of the

2006 vote by "maintaining strength where he did well and increasing votes where he did poorly." Kabila mentioned each of the 11 provinces and numerous cities throughout his State of the Nation address. (Note: Some observers have disputed that Kabila really went to Gemena, an extremely isolated outpost, and that the "visit" was a fabrication of pro-Kabila news media. End note.)

18. (C) Anti-corruption: The ruling Alliance for the Presidential Majority (AMP) coalition is "trapped," opined the Le Phare daily, by Kabila's Zero Tolerance policy targeting official corruption. A sensitive issue for a president running for reelection is the appearance of a double standard, the daily added. Newly elected Equateur Governor Jean-Claude Baende brought the last opposition party province into the president's circle of influence (ref E), but faces a national Senate investigation into alleged vote buying and the embezzlement of national funds retroceded to the provincial budget. While some observers believe a secondary reason for Kabila's visit to Gemena (para 7) was to reassure the embattled governor, Ilunga (with what appeared to be a regretful shake of the head and pained expression) Qto be a regretful shake of the head and pained expression) told poloff Baende's future "is not sure. Zero Tolerance applies to everyone."

19. (SBU) All politics is local: One domestic political theme of the newly-launched campaign positions Kabila as the "architect of national reconstruction." Kabila -- known to be enamored of modern machinery from high-performance automobiles and motorcycles to functioning factories -- is pictured in local posters, official website poses, and in newspaper coverage behind the controls of industrial machinery and tractors. In his address, Kabila promised 1,000 tractors in the next two years to modernize the agricultural sector. Of those, at least 94 could be independently confirmed due to a three-year program announced on November 26 by the Ministry of Agriculture. The program, developed jointly by Caritas International and the Congolese National Conference of Catholic Bishops would provide two tractors to each of the country's 47 dioceses. Diocesan priests and nuns would maintain their own farm as an example to their congregation members, who could use the tractors on a communal farm, suggested Agriculture Minister Norbert Basengezi Katintima to the Le Phare newspaper.

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110. (C) Discussing Kabila's plans after a second term, the maximum permitted under the DRC constitution, some analysts foresee a diplomatic role for a young and charismatic former head of state such as Kabila. Ilunga, assistant to Kabila's cabinet director, shared his opinion with poloff that Kabila would be the voice for a special issue such as the environment. Indeed, Kabila spoke passionately toward the end of his address about climate change, the Copenhagen Summit, and the DRC perspective on preservation (ref C). Invoking the DRC's "unparalleled biodiversity, bountiful resources, and immense forests," Kabila said that for the Congolese the environment is "not a cause but a conviction."

111. (C) Comment: Kabila's speech appears to be the first salvo in the upcoming electoral season. And Kabila, at this point, has the field all to himself. Public discontent has not coalesced around an alternative national figure, opposition parties are in disarray, and even if the Senate investigation finds newly installed Equateur Governor Baende guilty, Kabila may sacrifice him to make an example of what is not acceptable. In 2010, Kabila will try to provide tangible benefits to voters via stimulus spending, strategic successes (e.g., MONUC planning for its drawdown), and economic progress (e.g., an IMF deal). Serious challenges, however, confront his goal of being re-elected. First and foremost, the fragile peace in most of the country could easily deteriorate. Also, some of the benefits he hopes to secure for voters (particularly economic benefits) may prove

to be beyond his reach. Kabila's progress towards a second term as president, both informally and institutionally, is underway. End comment.

GARVELINK